

White-headed Mousebird *Colius leucocephalus*

Records of this species from Garissa (0°27'S, 39°39'E) represent a new locality for Kenya and are of interest because this area is approximately midway between the known ranges of *C. l. turneri* in northern Kenya and the nominate race along the lower Tana River. These occurrences, recorded by R. and L.M. Greenham (*in litt.*), were seasonal: 15 December 1974; 23 January, 15 November and 20 December 1975 and 29 December 1976.

Brown-breasted Barbet *Lybius melanopterus*

Britton (1980) described this species as common along the Tana River, upstream to Garissa. An adult was seen perched on the topmost exposed twigs of tall riverine trees opposite Samburu Lodge (0°35'N, 37°32'E) on 10 December 1977 (E. Muller and ADL) thus representing an extension of range of approximately 265 km to the northwest. The bird had presumably wandered northwestwards along the Tana, Ewaso Ng'iro and associated river systems. This record certainly represents a vagrant from the species' normal range since there is no subsequent record of this conspicuous bird on the numerous lists from this frequently visited locality contributed to the Kenya bird atlas scheme.

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REFERENCE

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RECENT KENYA RECORDS OF CLARKE'S WEAVER *PLOCEUS GOLANDI*
AND AN INDICATION OF ITS BREEDING SEASON

Clarke's Weaver *Ploceus golandi* is a Kenya endemic at present known only from coastal areas between Kilifi Creek and the Sabaki River, in and around Sokoke Forest, and its nesting sites are unknown (Britton 1980). It is apparently seasonal in occurrence, Britton & Zimmerman (1979) stating that it is seldom recorded outside the period August to October, while Britton (1980) states that it is most frequent in August and September and that it is either absent or overlooked for months at a time.

The East African Bird Reports (*Scopus* 1977-1983) give the following additional information on recent occurrences in Sokoke Forest:

- 1976: 20 on 7 December
- 1977: regular August to October
- 1978: about 25 on 3 April; large flocks of mostly immatures reappeared from 16 August and remained through September and October, last seen on 10 November
- 1979: a pair "possibly nesting nearby" on 18 April; present August and 20 November
- 1980: 15 netted 6 July; a few 25 November
- 1981: small numbers August and early November
- 1982: about 100 15 April; 30+ 23 September.

The period of regular occurrence has thus been extended to August to November

with records also for July and December, while the April occurrences suggest that this species may also be present, but overlooked, in May and June.

In addition to these records, there is another April record as follows: on 4 April 1982 the author observed two flocks of *P. golandi* in the canopy of *Brachystegia* at Sokoke, one flock of 30 and one of 60 birds. The birds were very noisy, constantly uttering chattering and chirping calls, and not only were adults of both sexes present, but also juveniles which, in some cases were closely accompanying adult females. The juvenile plumage of this species is apparently not described in the literature, and brief field notes taken at the time of observation record that the juveniles were dull greenish above, hardly streaked, and washed with dull yellowish below. The wing pattern was not noted. Some of the juveniles were seen to beg for food from females, and at least one was fed by its accompanying female on several occasions.

The behaviour of the juveniles indicated recent breeding, and this is of interest because there is very little information on the possible breeding season of this weaver. Apart from the pair seen in Sokoke in April 1979 which were thought to be possibly nesting locally, there is only the record of flocks of predominantly immatures reappearing from August in 1978. It is not possible to calculate accurately the period in which the 1982 juveniles were bred, but an estimate may be made on the basis of the available information for other *Ploceus* species (E.A.N.H.S. Nest Record Scheme data and personal observations). A study of the Golden Palm Weaver *P. bojeri* at Mombasa in 1981 (P.B. Taylor in prep.) gave approximate periods of incubation and nestling stages of 13 and 16-17 d respectively. Assuming that the equivalent periods for *P. golandi* are not greatly different, the time from laying to fledging should not be more than about 30 d.

Hardly any information is available on the period of post-fledging dependence, but on E.A.N.H.S. nest record cards completed by Mrs F. Ng'weno for Baglafaecht Weaver *P. baglafaecht* the period of dependence is estimated to be 35 to 42 d (four broods). It may therefore be estimated that the still-dependent young of the *P. golandi* were not more than five weeks out of the nest (and presumably not less than one week, as they could fly well). Laying therefore probably took place from five to nine weeks before the date of observation, i.e. in February.

It is possible that free-flying but dependent young could accompany adults on at least local movements, so the April 1982 record does not necessarily indicate breeding in Sokoke Forest, and the birds could have travelled some distance from their breeding grounds. Indeed, the possible breeding month of February makes it unlikely that breeding took place either at Sokoke Forest or elsewhere on the Kenya coast: Brown & Britton (1980) give no February or March breeding records for any *Ploceus* species in their coastal Region E, and state that ploceids at the coast tend to breed in the main rains with a late rains peak in August. Moreover, the only coastal East African breeding record for a forest weaver is for the Dark-backed *P. bicolor* in April 1921 (E.A.N.H.S. Nest Record Scheme). The complete lack of records of *P. golandi* from Sokoke Forest in January to March also suggests that the birds may be absent from the area at this time, but they could conceivably be present and breeding in inaccessible areas. However, there is no definite evidence to suggest that *P. golandi* breeds either at the Kenya coast or in forest, and the possibility of medium- to long-distance movements to and from breeding areas cannot be discounted.

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